

LIFE STORY OF A POET

JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY RELATES HIS EXPERIENCES.

How He Painted Signs on Fences and Got Into Trouble Over a Peem Alleged to be by Poe.

(Copyright, 1894.)

Here is the life story of James Whitcomb Riley, the Hoosier poet, as told by himself, from the day ne scrawied his first imperfect rhymes in an uncertain childish hand to the present time. It is an intensely human story of an intensely human being, it is a story of striggle and stress; of bitter discouragements and mistakes sincerely regretted; of blind gropings along obscure pathways; of new organizes, of final perseverance in the lace of almost ministe difficulties and of ultimate and satisfying friumph. (Copyright, 1894.)

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Mr. Riley's success possesses some unusual elements. Perhaps his universal popularity among the people of his own city, Indianapolis, is the most noticeable of these.

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He is, indeed, more than popular in Indianapolis; he is held in sincere and universal affection. Everyone knows him and almost everyone knows him and elimost everyone knows him and almost everyone and the surest way to raise money for any charitable purpose there is to get up an entertainment in which James Whitcomb Riley is a figure. Clearly the Biblical saying that "a prophet is not without honor save in his own country," may not be properly quoted with reference to Riley and Indianapolls. On the evening before the day I listened to Mr. Riley's story, here reported, a number of tableaux, illustrating his poems, were presented in aid of the Flower Mission. The largest available auditorium in the city was none too spachous to hold those who crowded in to see the tableaux, for the characters were to "attended and posed by the poet himself. Some "as groups were humorous, some were picturesque, but the most effective were those illustrating pathetic pieces. When the three tableaux accompanying the recital of "Good-bye Jim; Take Care of Yourself" were shown, the voice of the reader was scarcely and the content of the sobbing among the spectators.

His popularity among his own people cannot but be gratifying to him, but he bears his honors modestly, almost with fear, lest he shall not continue to be worthy. When I met him in the little recess where he keeps his desk, on the main floor of his Indianapolis publishers' establishment, he turned the conversation by speaking of the weather

RILEY'S HOME MADE VALENTINES

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"It was while I was still a small boy," he said, "that I wrote my first rhymes. They were the outcome of what seemed dire necessity to my childish mind. You see, most of the other children of the little town where our family lived were in the habit of sending valentines back and forth. They were of the old-fashioned comic sort; the picures were distorted caricatures, the verses were destorted caricatures, the verses were distorted caricatures, the verses were destorted caricatures as much like the picures were distorted caricatures were the leading the verses were distorted car

a chance to ring in a dairymaid's song. The verses wound up by explaining that the farmers thought more of the young man when they found he was an inventor and net a poet. The last line, I remember, was 'Patent applied for.'

STRUGGLES FOR DIRECTNESS OF EXPRESSION. "At first I tried to mend the faulty lines here and there, but I could not make that plan work always, and I was often forced to write my own pieces. But I was afraid my hearers would not like the verses if I said they were mine, and so I always declared that I had found them somewhere in some old book or worn-out newspaper. Whenever one made a hit I saved it and improved it and added it to my list. When thee was no hit I simply buried the production, and that was all there was to it.

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"Ever since those early days, I was little more than a boy then, I have been striving for direct and natural expression. This has been especially true in my dialect poems. I have had to work very hard sometimes to make my characters say the things they had to say in the manner they would naturally say them-to avoid awkward, clumsy, indirect construction—but it has always repaid me in the doing. What measure of popularity my poems have ever won has been due more to this, I think, than to any other thing. Then, while I have tried not to neglect form, I have also tried never to put mere style ahead of matter. It is always possible to achieve both rhyme and rhythm, and still adhere to the direct construction, but I am sorry to say that some of the best poets do not always go on that plan. Longfellow's style is very direct, and so is Tennyson's more uniformly, perhaps, than the American direct, and so is Tennyson's more uni-formly, perhaps, than the American poet's.

SAYS HE'S BUT A REPORTER.

"How do I get my ideas and my lines? I surely don't invent them. I only report them. I cannot remember that I ever originated a phrase. I do not believe that by the way, the things that I heard when a bov and unconsciously stored up in my memory. I did not live in direct and daily contact with the farmers, you know, but in a little town where I was just enough removed from this direct contact to give the farmer talk a chance to impress itself upon my mind.
"I still go in and out among the farmers now and then and talk to them and listen to them and study them. Then



The Brightest Star's the modestest.

And more'n lively writes

His motto live the lightnine's bug's
Accordin' To His Leights.

Very truly your friend.

James Winternet Filey.

recitationists much older than I then was, and to speak the lines, especially of character pieces, as if they were spontaneous and unstudied expressions or statements of fact. But there was so much inverted construction in the popular recitation pieces, the cart was so often put before the horse by the writers, that I found it impossible to recite the lines naturally. So I set about remedying the difficulty. "I don't know that I can remember for sure, but one of the first payments of money I ever received came from bonald G. Mitchell, Tk Marvel, then editor of Hearth and Home." I knew Mitchell by reputation very well, and I was in the clouds when I got a check from him and a letter commending my verses. The amount was meagre enough, but I had obtained a footing at last I thought. After a little I sent him a whole bundleno, not a bundle, but a 'judiciously selected assortment'—of verses. They all came back to me, but the sting was taken away somewhat by the accompanying note, which said he was pieased with them, but inasmuch as the publisher was about to abandon 'Hearth and Home' they could not be printed in that periodical. I have always thought his reason a most excellent one. I was working on a country newspaper then, writing rhymes into the advertisements and local news at very small weekly pay.

"'Destiny' was the name of the poem Mitchell printed in 'Hearth and Home' they could not be printed in that periodical. I have always thought his reason a most excellent one. I was working on a country newspaper then, writing rhymes into the advertisements and local news at very small weekly pay.

"'Destiny' was the name of the poem Mitchell printed in 'Hearth and Home' and it was illustrated by L. Hopkins, who must be remembered by some of your readers as a rising caricaturist thirty years ago. He is now in Australia. I believe. It was all about a long-haired young mau, who associated much with himself—took to solitude, you know—walked alone in the woods, and paid little attention to common things. The farmers abou

every letter he received, and I really wanted to get his opinion of my work. I was not like all who send verses to poets in this regard, as I have since found out by the letters I receive nearly every day. I wrote to Longfellow that it would be cruel to encourage me if he didn't think there was something in my lines, for I had a good trade at which I could earn more than I could in a printing office. Longfellow wrote back in a very brief line that my work showed true poetic insignt. I showed this line to an Indianapolis editor, who said that, in the circumstances, he would be glad to look at my verses. The result was a home market for some of my earlier work at not very big pay.

the Anderson Democrat, and for a time it seemed that I would not be able to get another.

"Before I go any further, I want to say that one of my chief regrets in this whole matter has always been the mis taken report that Edmund Clarence Sted man was deceived by the forgery, and nad pronounced it and the poem incontestably Poe's own. He never said such a thing. He did say that in matter and in handwriting, the poem was the best imitation of Foe's work he had ever seen, but he has since shown me manuscripts by Poe which differed so completely from our imitation that Stedman surely could not have been fooled. Poe used to write either on long strips, or else paste short strips together, and one poem which Mr. Stedman showed me was twenty-eight feet long when unrolled.

"As I have already said, my regret on account of Leonainie has always been very great. I tried for a while to live it down by ignoring it, but that is not the best way, and as you know, the verses are now included in my latest volume. This is the first time the poem has ever been published by me as mine, and there are many who should know better, who even now Lelieve it to be Foe's. Within the past year a Philadelphia editor reproduced it, and said it was singular that so remarkable a plece of work should not be included in any of the published collections of his poems.

OUT OF THE WOODS AT LAST.

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RILEY AS SIGN WEITER.

"My trade? Sign-writing, as everybody knows. I took naturally to designing and lettering as 1 had to making my valentines when a boy. I worked hard when I was writing signs—too hard for one of my shill dand not overabundant strength. You know! Was one of the first to pain you have been used to make an advertise and a literary thief. The page of the pag

Johnson, of Boone. You see, I was still afraid of my own name. I introduced the poem with a little paragraph, in which I gently guyed the supposed writer of the gently guyed the supposed writer of the could produce verse, who thought he could produce verse, who thought he foolid produce verse, who thought he Hoosier dialect, and it took, So I wrote other verses of a similar nature from time to time. Now, there was no Benjamin F. Johnson, of Boone, and there was great curiosity as to who the author of the verses could be. Actually, there were five claimants to the doubtful honor. After a while we brought out my first volume, which was made up of twelve of these poems over my own name. The book was entitled The Ol' Swimmin' Hole, and Eleven More Poems,' No, 'The Gobblens 'Il Git Ye if Ye Don't Watch Out' wasn't one of them, but 'The Frost is on the Punkin' was.

SOME PERSONAL PARAGRAPHS.

much to do that I had to take a partner, and after a while we branched out from the patent medicine line. We used to go to the county seats and propose to the business men that we should advertise their stores, shops, etc., in the manner that had hitherto been monopolized by the patent medicine men. That partner of mine was a great chap. There never was such another solicitor. I fairly worshipped him, because he was so successful in getting business, and he worshipped me because I could go the work so well after he had got the business. As a canvaiser he was systematic and scientific. He would attack the business men of a county seat in this way. As soon as we were ready to select our victim we would study the county paper, and from it would learn who was the most enterprising drycoods.

HOW "LEONAINIE" CAME TO BE WRITTEN.

How "Leonainie" came to be written.

"The junior editor on the rival paper in Anderson, a good fellow, by the way, too I think now, though I didn't then, used to tease me about my verses, which he assured me were very silly.

"Why, Jim," he used to ray, 'your rhymes are pure rot, just rot, and nothing but rot.

"I differed with him, of course, but the fact that I could not get my rhymes accepted by the magazines was declared by him to be proof that he was right. He used to drive me frantic. I told him that my matter was poetry and not rot,

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"I have been criticised in certain literary quarters for my dialect work, which some people say is not literature. They say dialect verse tends to fix dialect forms of expression, and that this is especially true of poems containing the dislect of children. Now, I disagree with these critics. While I do not claim that any of my work is literature in the highest sense, I cannot see that 'The Gobbiens,' for instance, can harm the speech of any child. I am fond of the dialect of childhood, and I think that the child who should be prevented from speaking in the broken prattle of infancy would be unjustly deprived of one of the sweetest things in this life, and would grow up warped in some way.

"I use dialect in my books as I use it in my platform entertainments, because I wish to please all. I sometimes introduce other features that are deciared to be frivolous in certain quarters, but I wish to interest the filterate as well as the lettered, the child as well as the mature reader, and sometimes these frivolities may carry with them something of value. The Creator has permitted dialect, and I cannot fail to enderre it.

"It is not easy to put dialect into The."

"It is not easy to put dialect into print. So much depends on the intuition. The Yankee and the Hoosier dialects look much alike spelled out and yet the word 'goin' is pronounced in an essentially different way by the man in New Hampshire and the man in Indiana. Yes, there is always trouble with editorial compositors. I have more nowadays with the eastern printer than the western. The Indianian says 'comin' and 'eatin' and generally drop the final 'g,' but he also always says 'morning' and 'evening,' giving the final 'g its true and full value in these words. It is not easy to get the eastern compositor to follow copy on that.

"My favorite novelist? Well Black-"It is not easy to put dialect into print.

"My favorite novelist? Well Blackmore's Lorna Doone is my fatorite story,
but Dickens pleases me most 'all round.'
He seems to understand every phase of
humanity in nature. Longfellow is my
favorite poet, especially in his simpler,
more direct poems, like 'The Bridge,
'The Day is Done,' etc. In these the
subtlest are of the poet is shown—so subtle is it indeed that it is not perceived
by the ordinary reader at all and that
is the highest triumph of poetic art.

"Have I a maxim? No, but here is a
couplet which I always have in mind.'
And Mr. Riley wrote the following slowly, but, as the reader will see, from the
fac-simile here printed, as lightly as
print:
"The Brightest Star's the modestest, and The Brightest Star's the modestest, and

He would attack the business men of a county seat in this way: As soon as we were ready to select our victim we would study the county paper, and from it would learn who was the most enterprising drygoods man, for instance, in the advertising line. Then McClannahan—that was his name, though he used to use another—would go to the merchant and gay:
"You are evidently the most wideawake man in this town. Now, we have been painting advertisements on barns, fences and rocks for medicine firms, and we know what we are saying when we assert that such advertising is the most remunerative in the world, especially, because once paid for, it lasts for years. Now there are eight roads leading out of this town, and we will put your ad. in artistic style on every one of the fences and barns along these roads for three miles out, for so much money.

"The business man would generally kick at the price named, but then McClanahan would draw out the county paper. We were both familiar with advertising rates on country papers, and McClanahan would say:

"You pay so and so much—within a few dollars of what we ask—every year for your newspaper advertising, and your rival is allowed to advertise his business right here in the opposite corner of the sheet. Now, we won't take your rival's ad. at all, we handle one man in each line only; and by closling a contract with us, you will shut up the eight roads running into this town to every other dry goods man. If you don't want to go in, we'll see the other fellow."

"That alwu, ys succeeded. I do not now remember a single instance of failure. We never had any trouble in getting the use of the barns, either. McClannahan had a way of admiring the farmer's horses or his cattle, or presenting his wife with a dress pattern, or something that was very taking. Business grew so with us that in time we were obliged to engage assistants to the number of seven or eight. After we hired them, I used to simply do the designing in colored chalks or sometimes in brush, as I was at work sign writing. So w

print:

"The Brightest Star's the modestest, and more'n likely writer

"His motto like the lightnin' oug's—
Accordin' To His Lightr."

"These words mean this," he said as he finished the writing, "that no one should be proud of his achievements as due to any personal merit beyond the fact that he has lived up to the gifts with which he was endowed at birth.

"It was not till I was twenty-live or thereabouts that I learned to write so the printers could read it. When I was a small boy my right thumb was smashed in a closing door and I lost one joint. This spoiled my handwriting for years and makes it very slow work now. My brother John, now in Los Angeles, Cal., in business, used to copy my verse for me. He is a successful business man, but he might have written better poetry than I ever can had he exercised his gifts in that direction. He is a good brother. He found when young that he must give up all literary aspirations and work along other lines, and he did it without a murmur, and he also gave up his violin and his guitar, of both of which he was very found. He still versifies, however, for his own pleasure and that of his intimates.

Mr. Riley is a single man. Two of his sisters are married and ver in Indianapo-Mr. Riley is a single man. Two of his in Greenfield, Ind. T. D. MARSHALL.

Old Scottish Cures.

by him to be proof that he was right. He used to drive me frantic. I told him that my matter was poetry and not rot, and that some day he would find it out. I said to him that if my verses were put out over a big name they would go. He laughed at me most exasperatingly, and I determined to put the matter to the test. Then followed one of my gravest mistakes, about which much has been written and said, and I hope you will tell the story just as I tell it to you. "I wrote to the publishers of the Kokomo (Ind.) Gazette. They were friends of mine, and I proposed the scheme that resulted in the publication of the verses called Leonainle. I said that it could be made to appear that an unpublished poem by Poe had been found in an old book, and that if it could it would make a great literary sensation. They told me to get the noem ready and send it along. So I studied Poe's methods. He seemed to have a theory, rather misty, to be sure, about the use of Ms and Ms and mellifluous vowels and sonorous words. I remember that I was a long time getting up the name Leonainle, but at last the verses were finished and printed in the Kokomo Gazette. "As you remember, my prediction that Old Scotti-h Cures.

A baldheaded man would hesitate befor following Sir John Mancreiff's advice to "make a lee of the burnt ashes of dove heart, and wash the head well," althoughtere is some consolation in learning that the same beneficial results would accruft from using "the ashes of little frogs. the hair, according to this authority, make changed to a golden that by using simple lotion, composed of the ashes of the livy plant. Ladies who sigh for fair complexion may secure it by such pleasant method as washing the face with the "distilled water of snalls," and the application of "the liver of a sheep, fres!

As you remember, my preact the poem would create a great literary sensation was fully verified, and this, in my mind, vindicated my contention that my verses were really O. K. It is strictly true that the virdication of the idea was the only thing I thought of when I planned Leonainie and its publication. I did not wish to swindle any one, but, of course, I did not want to be found out. But for a blunder on the part of the editor of the Kokomo Gazette the deception might never have been discovered. Anticipating that the authenticity of the verses might be doubted, he printed a paragraph saying that if ny one thought the poem begos the manuscripts might be seen. Now, there was no manuscript. But a great number of persons called to look at it. There were reporters from big city dailies, literary folks in droves, and finally Poe's biographer sent for it. Then there was a wail from the editor.

"What shall we do?" he asked me over and over again.

"I said, 'its as easy to make a manuscript, surely, as it was to write verses that have made so much of a sensation.'

"So we got some fac similes of Poes's writing from a magazine. I wrote out the verses with proper indentation, and an artist friend of mine copied them in the old book in which we claimed to have found them. The forgery was very well done—better than were the verses, I fancy, and for a long time the manuscript was declared genuine. But the exposure came at last, and while Leonaine had demonstrated my view of my verse to be correct, it got me into no end of trouble. I lost my situation on the Anderson Democrat, and for a time it seemed that I, would not be able to get another.

"Before I go any further, I want to see the test of the contract of the second that it would not be able to get another. plication of "the liver of a sucception and hot," will make the whole face well colored.

Should the nose unfortunately bleed, and the familiar remedy of thrusting a bunch of keys down the back of the neck fall of the desired result, then the assured styptic is to put into the nostrils a mixture of the hair of a hare and vinegar. Sir John bears testimony: "I mysel' know this to be the best of anything known." Blood flowing from a cut may be instantly stauched by simply holding a jasper in the hand, or by putting a cow's blood into the wound. The reader will be apt to remark that neither of these is a handy remedy for such an emergency. An ointment made of earthworms will cure paralysis, if the affected parts be anointed with the compound. Sleeplessness, so common an allment in our own time, can be removed, according to Sir John, by "applying living creatures to the head to dissolve the humor," and Sir John narrates that for measles "many keep an ewe or wedder in their chamber or on the bed, because these creatures are easily infected, and draw the venom to themselves, by which means some case may happen to the sick person." In a similar manner, if the trouble be a colic, a live duck or frog applied to the part "draws all the evil to itself and dies." Epilepsy may be prevented by wearing a girdle of wolf's skin. Should any one have been so negligent as to

Hars Sachs was one of the most vol-uminous writers—this "Peoples" Goeth-of the Sixteenth centruy," as he has no inaptly been called. His works contain upward of 6,000 pieces, among them are more than 200 tragedies, com dies are farces; about 1,700 fables and drollertes togsther with religious hymns, war somes

I have witnessed the finely-powdered product passing through all the complicated processes connected with gold-saving, in processes connected with gold-saving, in which quicksliven ripples, blankets, and delicate chemical operations all play a part. The gold-bearing sand from the part. The gold-bearing sand from the patteries is subjected to manipulation after manipulation, and with untiring care each series of manipulations is repeated series of manipulations is repeated and ingenuity appear to have been exhausted, the useless sludge is allowed to run off. I follow the mudically channel as it cuts its way through a vast mountain of tailings.

At the extreme edge of these I encounter a chinaman and a break-wind. The latter shelters him from heat and wind, and ter shelters him from heat and wind, and behind its cover are a miniature set of sluices, with quicksilver plates, ripples and blankets all complete. Where the Caucasian has admitted himself to be played out, the Mongolian is saving gold. Here is an alchemist, who can find the precious metal in the dirt-wash from the battery, in which every appliance that money can purchase and man's ingenuity devise is in operation. Yet the average Australian miner would, if he could, hunt this Chinaman from the field. But John pays a small rent to the mine to secure the right of occupation, and once in the country, and duly registered, he is protected by all the forces of the law.—The Nineteenth Century.

Steam Lawn Mower.

Steam Lawn Hower.

Steam has been applied to the lawn mower with more success than horse or hand power. It is also more economical. The boiler is multitubular, containing sixysix copper tubes, and a copper fire-box, and the shell is made of mild steel, and tested by hydraulic pressure to 30 pounds the safety valve is set to 150 pounds, and the working pressure at 190. The steam pressure is regulated by a steam diaphragm, which automatically controls the surply of oil fuel to the burner, and by this means the steam is said to be maintained at a uniform pressure, while the engine is working, and should the attendant leave the macffine for any purpose while the lamp is burning, it is stated the diaphragm will not allow the steam to attain more than the set pressure, so that all possible danger of an explosion is obviated.

The water is fed to the boiler by a brass force pump, and is first passed through a heater, and delivered to the boiler at a temperature of about 180 degrees Fahrenheit. The oil fuel is burnt in the firebox of the boiler by a burner similar to that on a maptha lamp.

The oil is carried in a specially constructed reservoir at the top of the chimney, and is led to the burner by a small tube down the side of the chimney and boiler. The water is carried in a cylinder between the shafts of the machine. The advantages chaimed for the steam lawn mower, beside the economy, is that the lawn is not marred by the footprints of a horse, and that the machine is not result to the steam lawn mower, beside the economy, is that the lawn is not marred by the footprints of a horse, and that the machine is not result to the product as a small portable around beds and long hedges. The ap-

round beds and long hedges. The apparatus can be used as a small pectable agine for driving any kind of light mathinery, such as chaff cutters, laundry nachines, pumps, churus, etc.,

Not implacable.

Cook (on the day after her arrival)— Please, Mum, I'm a bit fiery at time; and when I'm fiery, I'm apt to be a bit cough-spoken; but you needn't let that at you about. With a little present you can albus bring me round again.— The New York (Observer) you can allus bring into

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